

FINAL PROPOSAL: CHARTER COMMUNICATION  
CUSTOMER SERVICE QUALITY & COMPLAINT  
STANDARDS, MONITORING & REPORTING PLAN

This document establishes the method by which Charter Communications shall monitor and evaluate the quality of service provided to its customers and track complaints by customers in the State of Vermont. It shall be referred to throughout the document as “Service Quality Plan” or “SQP.”

Section I: Service Quality Performance Areas

Charter Communications' service quality is subject to the following 16 performance areas and standards.

- A. At least 90 percent of calls to a customer service representative shall be answered within 30 seconds under normal operating conditions.
- B. Under normal operating conditions, average monthly calls abandoned shall not exceed five percent of total calls reaching Charter Communications.
- C. Under normal operating conditions, the customer will receive a busy signal less than three percent of the time.
- D. Under normal operating conditions, at least 95 percent of standard installations shall be performed within 7 business days after the order has been placed.
- E. Under normal operating conditions, at least 95 percent of the time work on service interruptions (nil or no picture trouble calls) shall begin promptly and in no event later than 24 hours after the interruption becomes known to Charter.
- F. Under normal operating conditions, at least 95 percent of the time work on non-nil service calls shall begin the next business day after notification of the service problem.
- G. At least 95 percent of the time under normal operating conditions, Charter Communications shall offer a four-hour "appointment window" during normal business hours.
- H. At least 95 percent of the time under normal operating conditions, appointments shall not be cancelled after the close of business on the business day prior to the scheduled appointment.

- I. At least 95 percent of the time under normal operating conditions, the customer shall be contacted in advance if a company representative is running late for an appointment and shall be unable to keep the appointment as scheduled. These customers shall have the opportunity to reschedule at a time convenient for them.
- J. In all cases of billing complaints, Charter Communications acknowledge all billing complaints not later than three business days after receipt.
- K. In all cases of billing complaints in which the proposed disposition offered by Charter Communications is contested by the consumer, the company shall have 15 business days from the date on which the consumer contested to provide a final disposition.
- L. All refunds shall be issued no later than either: (a) the customer's next billing cycle following resolution of the request or 30 days, whichever is earlier; or (b) the return of the equipment supplied by Charter Communications if service is terminated.
- M. In all cases of a billing dispute, Charter Communications shall respond to written complaints within 30 days.
- N. All credits for service shall be issued no later than the customer's next billing cycle following the determination that a credit is warranted.
- O. Credits shall be given for all outages known to Charter Communication that are more than 24 hours in duration. Credits for qualifying outages shall be provided upon customer request unless the outage is system-wide or the subscriber's disruption is otherwise known to the cable company, in which case Charter shall provide credit without customer request.
- P. All consumer complaints to Charter Communications will be: captured and tabulated, analyzed and reported quarterly, including corrective actions taken in response to the complaints.

#### Section II: Measurement, and Reporting Protocol

- A. Performance areas listed in Section I shall be measured as detailed in Section III. The detailed definition of each performance area is shown in Section III.
- B. This plan covers service to all Charter Communications' Vermont cable customers.
- C. Charter Communications shall begin performance monitoring in accordance with this SQP on the first day of the first calendar quarter following Board approval of the plan.

- D. Performance results shall be aggregated monthly and quarterly, and shall be reported quarterly to the Department of Public Service (DPS) and the Public Service Board (the Board).
- E. Quarterly reports shall include both monthly and quarterly averages. Quarterly averages shall be derived from raw data, not by averaging monthly averages.
- F. Charter Communications shall report its quarterly results for all performance areas no later than thirty days after the completion of each quarter.
- G. Where quarterly performance falls more than ten percent below any standard, or where performance does not meet any standard for two consecutive quarters, the Company shall within 30 days of the end of the quarter in which this provision is triggered, submit a corrective action plan indicating how it will regain the failed standard.
- H. Performance shall be evaluated and reported to one decimal place for all performance areas. Actual performance shall be rounded up when the second decimal place is more than 5. Charter Communications shall retain all of its reports that support the results for each of the performance areas for a period of not less than 24 months after the results are reported. Charter Communications shall provide these reports upon request to DPS and the Board.
- I. Charter Communications shall review with the DPS Division of Consumer Affairs & Public Information (CAPI) any change to Charter Communications' measurement protocol or to the internal reporting methods that are used to obtain the data measured prior to Charter Communications' implementation of such changes. Charter Communications shall have an affirmative duty to report missing data or other events that could reasonably affect the quality of the data at the time the Company becomes aware of such events.
- J. With respect to conditions Charter Communications believes fall outside "normal operating conditions" warranting exemption from standards that apply only in the case of normal conditions, Charter Communications shall, within a reasonable time but in no case more than one week of the commencement of the condition, notify DPS that it believes an "out of normal condition" has developed. Quarterly reports shall include detailed information concerning the commencement and duration of the excluded period. If DPS disputes the designation by the company of an out-of-normal condition, the Board shall be asked to rule on the matter.

K. Definitions:

1. Customer Complaint: A “customer complaint” is any situation in which a customer needs to be forwarded to a level higher than the customer service representative that initially speaks with the consumer. Should consumer complaints to the Department of Public Service concerning Charter exceed an annual rate for the prior calendar year of 2.5 escalations<sup>1</sup> per thousand customers, Charter shall modify its means of complaint tracking for a period of the subsequent three years. Should Charter be required to institute such complaint tracking, the company shall negotiate an appropriate complaint tracking plan, and shall submit the resulting plan to the PSB for approval. If DPS and Charter are unable to agree, they shall submit the dispute to the PSB for resolution.
2. Business Day: A “business day” is any day, Monday through Friday, excluding days on which legal holidays are observed and Charter Communications is closed to routine business operations.
3. Normal Business Hours: “Normal business hours” are 8am and 7pm Monday through Friday excluding days on which legal holidays are observed and Charter Communications is closed to routine business operations.
4. Reporting Month: A reporting month will go from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of one month through the 21<sup>st</sup> of the following month.
5. Normal Operating Conditions: “Normal operating conditions” shall be those service conditions that are within the control of Charter Communications. Those conditions, which are not within the control of Charter Communications, include, but are not limited to, natural disasters, civil disturbances, power outages, telephone network outages, and severe or unusual weather conditions.
6. Standard Installation: A standard installation shall be an installation of 300 feet or less, starting at the nearest end of the existing trunk or distribution system.

M. Charter Communications and the DPS shall meet regularly to discuss service quality issues, trends in service quality data reported by Charter Communications, issues raised by customer complaints filed with the DPS, and other policy issues relating to customer service. Charter Communications shall initiate these meetings on a periodic basis with a goal of meeting quarterly. Meetings may occur more frequently at DPS discretion. These meetings shall focus on customer service issues raised by customer complaints filed with the DPS and by other communications to the DPS from customers. The intent of these informal meetings is

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<sup>1</sup> “Escalation” is a complaint to the Consumer Affairs & Public Information Division of DPS in which, following investigation, CAPI staff determines reasonably there is something the company could and should have done differently prior to the consumer having to contact DPS for assistance.

to exchange information in an open and frank atmosphere, to suggest pragmatic solutions, and solve problems.

### Section III: Performance Standards

- A. Calls Answered Thirty Seconds: At least 90 percent of all calls during normal business hours shall be answered within 30 seconds under normal operating conditions. This standard shall be measured by utilizing the Call Management Software (CMS) that Charter Communications employs. Measurement begins when the call is placed in queue to reach a customer service representative (CSR) and is terminated when either the call is answered by a CSR or when the customer abandons the call. Charter Communications will program no more than 50 seconds of messaging prior to giving the customer the option to reach a customer service representative. Vectors that allow customers to automatically perform or receiver answers to their questions maybe longer than the allowed 50 seconds. Upon DPS objection to a request for a change in the standard, Charter Communications may not exceed the 50 second limit without first obtaining Board approval. Data shall be compiled monthly as one number for all systems beginning November 1, 2000, except as provided in Section II, Paragraph B above.

This standard is calculated as follows:

$TCA30/TCA$

TCA 30 equals the total calls answered within 30 seconds after being queued to reach a CSR. TCA equals the total number of calls answered during normal business hours.

- B. Abandoned calls: Under normal operating conditions, average monthly calls abandoned shall not exceed five percent of total calls reaching Charter Communications, excluding calls abandoned before 30 seconds has elapsed.

This standard is calculated as follows:  $(ABAN - ABAN30) / (CALLS + ABAN)$

ABAN equals the total number of calls abandoned. ABAN30 equals the number of calls that were abandoned within 30 seconds. CALLS equals the total number of calls answered.

Calculation method: Charter Communications will generate a Call Profile Monthly (CPM) that measure the total number of calls answered, the total number of abandoned calls, and the total number of abandoned calls within 30 seconds. This information will be transferred to a Call Abandoned (CA) spreadsheet that will calculate the percentage of calls abandoned.

- C. Calls transferred in 30 seconds: Charter Communications shall request a waiver of this standard from the Public Service Board since the company's call answering protocols do not provide for call transfer and the telephone system, therefore, is not programmed to measure performance. If DPS receives consumer complaints reflecting a pattern of transfers exceeding the 30-second time frame, Charter Communications and the Department will re-negotiate tracking of this standard.
- D. Customers Receiving Busy Signal: This standard requires, under normal operating conditions, the customer shall receive a busy signal less than three percent of the time. This standard shall be measured by the Call Management System (CMS) that Charter Communications employs. This number shall reflect all calls that are sent to Charter Communications local telephone and toll free numbers. This report assumes that any time all trunks to Charter Communications' Call Center are busy, customers are receiving busy signals.

The standard is calculated as follows:                    ATB/TM

ATB equals the total number of minutes all trunks were busy during normal business hours. TM equals the total minutes during normal business hours.

Calculation method: Charter Communications will generate a monthly report that indicates a percentage of time that all trunks to the Massachusetts' Call Center are busy. This report will be calculated based upon normal business hours. This number will be calculated monthly as a percentage of time all trunks were blocked.

- E. Installations Performed On Time: Under normal operating conditions, at least 95 percent of standard installations shall be performed within seven business days after the order has been placed. This standard shall be measured by utilizing information from the CSG report management system. The report that will be used is titled Work Order Response Time and is available on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of each month. This report produces a summary by work order type for all orders placed by customers during the proceeding reporting month. The report is sorted by management area and reports work orders completed within 0-5 days, 6-7 days and 8+ days. It lists the number of calls completed and the percentage that was completed within that time frame. It also lists the average time to complete for each work order type. This report automatically excludes all orders that were requested by the customer to be completed outside the seven day window.
- F. Repair of Service Interruptions: Excluding conditions beyond Charter Communication's control, at least 95 percent of the time, work on service interruptions (nil or no picture trouble calls) shall begin promptly and in no event later than 24 hours after the interruption becomes known. This standard shall be measured by utilizing information from the CSG report management system. The report that will be used is titled Agent

Trouble Call response Time and is available on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of each month. This report produces a summary of all trouble call work orders entered during the reporting month. It breaks them out by trouble call reason and sorts them by either outage or interruption. This lists the number of calls closed out, the average time to complete, # of calls completed and the percentages for 12 hours, 24 hours, 36 hours, 48 hours and 48+ hours. This report automatically excludes all orders that were requested by the customer to be completed outside the 24-hour window. For the reporting of this number Charter will use all non-modem related reasons. The measure will be calculated by dividing the number of orders completed within 24 hours (excluding modem-related orders) by the total number of orders (excluding modem orders) received.

- G. Repair of Non-Nil Troubles: Excluding conditions beyond Charter's control, at least 95 percent of the time work on non-nil service calls shall begin no later than the next business day after notification of the service problem. This standard shall be measured by utilizing information from the CSG report management system. The report that will be used is titled Agent Trouble Call response Time and is available on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of each month. This report produces a summary of all trouble call work orders entered during the reporting month. It breaks them out by trouble call reason and sorts them by either outage or interruption. This lists the number of calls closed out, the average time to complete, # of calls completed and the percentages for 12 hours, 24 hours, 36 hours, 48 hours and 48+ hours. This report automatically excludes all orders that were requested by the customer to be completed outside the 24-hour window. The measure will be calculated by dividing the number of non-nil orders started no later than the next business day by the total number of non-nil orders (excluding modem orders) received.
- H. Four-hour appointment window: At least 95 percent of the time under normal operating conditions, Charter Communications shall offer a four-hour "appointment window" during normal business hours. Charter Communications currently schedules all non-disconnect calls in four-hour windows. CSG currently allows us to schedule appointments in four-hour windows. Therefore, 100 percent compliance is assured by the system engineering and the standard need not otherwise be monitored. If DPS or the Company receives complaints concerning compliance with the standard, the need for monitoring will be revisited.
- I. Charter Communications Canceled Appointments: Under normal operating conditions, 95 percent of customers shall be contacted by the close of the prior business day in the event of an appointment cancellation. This standard shall be measured by utilizing information from Attachment J1, Appointments Cancelled By Dispatch, a manual report designed to track this standard. The data are compiled monthly for each Charter Communications office.

This standard is calculated as follows: CWN/C

CWN equals the number of appointments that were cancelled with notification by the close of the prior business day. C equals the number of appointments that were cancelled in total.

- J. Advance Notice of Late Appointment: At least 95 percent of the time under normal operating conditions, the customer shall be contacted in advance if a company representative is running late for an appointment and shall be unable to keep the appointment as scheduled. These customers shall have the opportunity to reschedule at a time convenient for them. This standard shall be measured from manual reports as shown in Attachment K1, Late Appointment Log. The data are compiled monthly for each Charter Communications office.

This standard is calculated as follows: NLA/LA

NLA equals the total number of customers who had late appointments that were notified. LA equals the total number of late appointments.

- K. Response to contested resolutions: In all cases of billing complaints in which the consumer contests the proposed disposition offered by Charter Communications, the company shall provide a final disposition within 15 business days of the date on which the consumer contested the company's response. *Charter Communications* shall track this standard via a manual log (see Customer Complaint Grievance Log, Attachment L1). Each system will designate a representative who shall log the incidents that occur when a customer contests Charter Communications proposed settlement of an issue, and will also log the eventual resolution of that issue. The data are compiled monthly for each Charter Communications office.
- L. Timely issuance of refunds: This standard measures the number of customers who have refunds due them shall have their refunds processed within either (a) the return of equipment, or (b) the earlier of 30 days or the next billing cycle. Performance will be measured on the basis of consumer complaints regarding late refunds. Complaints will be logged manually using the Customer Complaint Grievance Log (see Attachment L1).
- M. Response to billing complaints: All written billing disputes will be responded to within 30 days. This federal standard is far less stringent than the PSB standard L above, therefore, there is no necessity to track this standard separately.



- N. Timely issuance of credits: All credits for service shall be issued no later than the customer's next billing cycle following the determination that a credit is warranted. Performance will be measured on the basis of consumer complaints regarding failure to issue credits on a timely basis. Complaints will be logged manually using the Customer Complaint Grievance Log (see Attachment L1).

Outage credits: Credits shall be given for all outages longer than 24 hours, when requested by customer, when the outage is system-wide outages, and/or when the outage is otherwise known to Charter, that are more than 24 hours in duration. Credits shall be given for all outages known to Charter Communication that are more than 24 hours in duration. In the case of system-wide outages, and outages otherwise known to Charter, credit shall be provided automatically to affected consumers without the need for the customer to contact Charter.